Executive Proclamation
State of South Dakota
Office of the Governor

Whereas, The Black Hills National Forest is one of the most heavily populated forests in the United States and presents numerous wildland urban interface issues, where developed areas intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels; and,

Whereas, This area is susceptible to wildland fires that can devastate critical infrastructure, essential facilities, homes, and businesses and threaten one of South Dakota's top tourism regions, including Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Crazy Horse Memorial, the historic towns of Lead and Deadwood, Custer State Park, and numerous other cultural and historical properties; and,

Whereas, The Black Hills National Forest and surrounding areas are experiencing the effects of a long-term drought that is continuing into 2003, along with heavy fuel loads including pine beetle infestations in the Northern Black Hills and topography that promotes dangerous fire behavior and can hinder firefighting efforts; and,

Whereas, An urban interface wildfire is a dynamic event that demands an immediate, full-scale response in order to contain and control its spread so as to protect lives and property; and,

Whereas, The mission of the South Dakota Division of Wildland Fire Suppression is to protect South Dakota's natural resources from the ravages of wildfire, concentrating its direct suppression responsibility on forestland in and adjacent to the Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District:

Now, Therefore, I, M. Michael Rounds, Governor of the state of South Dakota, under the provisions of Chapter 33-15 of the South Dakota Codified Laws, otherwise known as the Emergency Management Law, do hereby grant authority to the South Dakota Division of Wildland Fire Suppression to augment its response efforts with the available assets of the South Dakota National Guard during and following an initial attack on any of its mission-related wildfires for the 2003 fire season (April 1, 2003, through October 31, 2003).

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Fifteenth Day of May in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Three.

M. Michael Rounds, Governor

Attest:

Chris Nelson, Secretary of State